Interview [P9]

P = Participant at case study institution

The following conventions are used in transcription of spoken interviews:

[replacement information in square brackets]

[redacted information in grey in square brackets]

[?] = unintelligible missing word(s); immediately following word = unclear[?]

[#] = redacted numerical information

CAPITALS to signify emphasis in speaking

((Extraneous information in double brackets))

Researcher  
So yeah, it was great that you're willing to do this interview and I think you responded um that you're, you know, willing to talk about maybe the INTERNATIONALIZATION strategy or was that right? That was your interest was more, yeah.

[P9]  
Yes, that’s right. Just a short introduction. I work in [unit] of the [governance body], where I'm responsible for [redacted identifying information]. So this is something I can talk about. Yeah, I have some some maybe connections to the to the, to the to teaching when it comes to international master’s view studies, or as as as a MEANS to uhh to find new talents for the doctoral education. Yeah, this is something I can talk a bit about.

[P9]  
But the technically teaching is not my focus or not my speciality, so I probably not talk about something I don't know much about, yeah.

Researcher  
Yeah, don’t worry. If there's ANYTHING I ASK you that you feel is NOT relevant to you or you're not, you don't WANT to talk about it just, you know, skip it. Just say just say, because um obviously I don't know exactly what it is you DO. So it could be that some of my questions aren't so relevant to YOU. Just again to say a little bit about our project. So you read the information sheet, but we're basically looking at WHY it is that English is becoming increasingly used for academic programs at European universities. So we have a kind of team of of people, and someone's already looked at the Netherlands because they were quite EARLY implementers of English language programs, um I'm looking at Austria, and we're looking also at Spain, I think Italy and possibly some other places, but we still need to coordinate that. So yeah, so our focus, it is we are looking at the English language programs, but when we're considering WHERE they come from, we're also looking at things like GOVERNANCE, which is why we have contacted people like yourself also in the [governance body]. So some of my questions might be asking in relation to the governance also, just to in case you're wondering why she asking me this ((laughing)).

Because when we look at things like also from the Universities Act 2002, it kind of has a relationship, a bearing also on the AUTONOMY that's given to the university to be ABLE to to do courses in different languages for example. So there are these kind of CONNECTIONS that we're looking into. So yeah, so as you mentioned, internationalization was a strategy you’d be HAPPY to talk about, and I thought maybe we could START from there.

So when I looked at the umm, the Internet on the website page that where it looked like there were FOUR main areas of your strategy: it mentions strategic partnerships in Europe, outside Europe, then DOCTORAL schools, which said you're also involved in the doctoral side of things, and then the kind of EXCHANGE mobility side of exchange programs and whatever.

I'm so I'm wondering are are there any kind of top down influences on your internationalization strategy, for example, from the BMBWF that you are aware of? Or are you kind of engaging quite freely in your in your strategy for your university?

[P9]  
Both actually. So there ARE some influences from top down, MAINLY on the European level, I'd say. The BIGGEST driver, for instance, would be the [European network name], which is going on right NOW, which you probably heard about, umm, the [name] [network], so which is a big issue for on the EUROPEAN level. And we recently joined the European university network, which is [name of network]. This will be one of the main PILLARS or DRIVERS for the internationalization in the next years. So we we plan to be REALLY active in this network. And this will be, this is quite a NEW development, yeah, but this will this will be a will we will will will put a STRONG focus on this in as well as TEACHING mobility, JOINT research and also we we hope that this will also be a driver for networks and for fewer for to increase the REPUTATION of the university in the academic community as a whole. So this is a great example for where the [case study university] picks up a European trend or follows a European trend and, you know, you fix this up and and and and puts this into place for its OWN internationalization strategy. Of COURSE we have, there are some European uhh some some, some some NATIONAL some national projects, or or notions by the university, which were also [?] to, which makes for up for on the the Erasmus partnerships, Erasmus plus, yeah, yeah. There are also some some projects, but the MINISTRY emphasizes some projects, which the university FOLLOWS or picks up IF we find this relevant, yeah. But basically it's a the the GOOD thing about autonomy or something we really proud of or strive for is to remain AUTONOMY as [?], maybe if the ministry says you should be we, we should look for partnerships in INDIA also MAYBE, this is something we would CRITICALLY reflect because it has to fit to our OWN strategy or their own strategy and OUR strategy is EUROPE first, then maybe US and and and Asia. Yeah, this is [?] mainly our three main PILLARS. IF the ministry would say we we need to DIFFERENTIATE or, maybe we could pick this up yeah, but it HAS to fit as whole. So you see this is like where we pick up certain topics which we find RELEVANT, but we as an individual university as an autonomous university, we're totally FREE to act how we see fit or how the rectorate sees fit.

Yeah. For instance, our current Rector put a LOT of emphasis on contacts to the US, where he has personal ties also to he recently opened three alumni chapters in the US, ALUMNI work is maybe also another BIG issue which will be RELEVANT for internationalization, because we will TARGET much more on international alumni and alumni in the future as bearers of university networks, so to speak.

Yeah. So this is something we will focus in the future. So this is what I say. Now we have a new rectorate coming up in [time reference] and probably the new Rector or the new Vice Rector responsible for internationalization will have a NEW focus. Yeah, but maybe he will say we should focus on AFRICA, or something, which is a big issue now uh with the [name of association] of the, for instance, that [?] [name of African university association]. Yeah, joint ties with the [name of association], which is a big university network, which we are ALSO part of, and they want to INCREASE the the cooperation with African universities. This is something we will ALSO look into in the future, but I don't know, I can't foresee what will BE the new focus of the new rectorate. So maybe there's a little shift. Yeah. But just to answer your question.

Yes, we will we will also pick up THEMES or notions on European or national levels from the ministries BUT in in in the framework of our individuality, in the framework of our AUTONOMY, we will set our own focus for internationalization and for TARGET regions, for instance.

Researcher  
Right, um I looked at the the BMBWF, internationalization, national mobility and internationalization strategy, there was some quite short document and it it said that OK, this is a GENERAL thing and the the it's for all FOUR higher education sectors, you know, not just public universities but University of Applied sciences, teaching colleges and private and the private sector as well, I think. But then, so they they were they they mentioned you know it's really UP to the university WHAT strategy of internationalization you PURSUE. But at the same time at the END they said that this is to be monitored internally within the university. But we're also going to do this through our steering instruments. So um looking at the National Development Plan by the BMBWF the goal #6 ‘Systemziel 6, Steigerung der Internationalisierung und der Mobilität‘. Um it's it's a goal that's on the National Development Plan. So I was wondering, does this affect do you think, do you feel that the International Development Plan kind of AFFECTS the the university development plan? So you're also, you're also involved in the [redacted identifying information], aren't you? Yeah. So.

[P9]  
Yes, so the ‘Hochschulplan’ and the ‘Hochschulplan’ goals and and and also when when we had, when we're making up the ‘Leistungsvereinbarung’ or the the the DRAFT for the ‘Leistungsvereinbarung’, which has to be signed by the university and the ministry, we ALSO look at the at the ‘Hochschulplan’, at the GUEP, and of course the GUEP ‘Systemziele’ they are relevant for this. Yeah. But as you mention, these are quite GENERIC, yeah, they have to apply for all the types of higher education institutes in Austria at first, and second, also the GOALS are quite generic. They say you HAVE to increase internationalization, you HAVE to increase mobility, yeah, but NOT with which universities, with which partners or with which which kind of types of universities. So in this sense, yeah, it is quite in LINE with our OWN university strategy because we WANT to be an international universities, we WANT to increase our OWN international activities, we WANT to be MORE international more MORE networking with we want to be more VISIBLE on the international scale, especially in the in the SCIENTIFIC international scientific community. So this is in LINE with the GOALS and this is nothing that would disagree with it with that. So we will say, OK, this is something we pick up from the from the national side. The ministry wants us to be more international. This is OK for US because we want to be international in the first place. So this is quite EASY. This is this is quite an EASY goal to achieve or to fall in LINE with.

Researcher  
And and the MINISTRY, I mean they also mention now because this NATIONAL development plan has been written into the University's Act 2002, that they have to ALSO produce it now. And so they they talk about a ‘Gegenstromprinzip’. So a counter current principle. Do you think that the university you're kind of strategic vision and goals FEED into the ministry as well as the ministry feeding in-?

[P9]  
Yeah, sure. Yeah, of course [?]. The ministry WANTS the universities to be more international. They see that Austria is a small landlocked country. We have, we, we have to RELY on on, on, on, on networking activities and the internationalization to stay RELEVANT, to be relevant in the first place and to stay relevant in the scientific community, but also in the European university landscape where we have to rely STRONGLY on networking and exchange programs and so on. And they are great THINGS. The uni-, the the great exchange program, ERASMUS, for instance. This is a is a TOTAL success story for ALL the universities and for the program and for the EU funding and for the ministry which facilitates this program via the ÖAD. So this is something, of course, the ministerial pushes that they want MORE Erasmus cooporations, they want MORE Erasmus mobilities, they want the universities ALSO to participate in Erasmus PLUS and INTER[?] and other kind of European EXCHANGE programs. And we happily OBLIGE, because this is something which is also in line with our STRATEGY. We WANT to be more international and we WANT to be more and more well and we want, are you are you are our students and our researchers to be mobile. WE come up with instruments to facilitate the mobility of our researchers and students. And we WANT or we RELY on the government to also facilitate, facilitate this. Yeah, but instance for by by STREAMLINING the the the the legal framework for this, making it EASIER for for for all students to go abroad, and also for for researchers from abroad to come to AUSTRIA, which is extremely relevant, especially for researchers coming from third states, third party countries. So this is something which we ADHERE to. Yeah, [?] we find this totally cool, BUT we we also NEED the the the ministry to HELP us with this. They have to help us, especially with the legal framework of the whole thing. Yeah.

Researcher  
So do you think there's this interaction between the institution and the government comes through the STEERING, or does it come through the RECTOR, for example, UNIKO, like the rectors being united in some way or-

[P9]  
But we have to say what that there are several, several BODIES which help us with this. Of course we have the we have the RECTOR, the Rector is is maybe is is has a very important function because he's kind of the REPRESENTATIVE of the universities and high level contracts or partnership contracts, they are the matter of the rector himself. He's very he has a lot for instance the current rector, as I mentioned before, he has STRONG ties to other universities uh HIGH level universities ALL over the world, and of course he or she acts as a kind of ambassador to the other universities. Yeah. Then we have a [governance role], which is in charge of all the internationalization activities of the university. And then we have a so-called [international unit] which deals with all the administrative stuff at first, for instance, facilitating the Erasmus exchange programs and so on and also the strategic programs and the memberships in university associations and [name of network]. For instance, we have [#] new persons and the [international unit] dealing just with the [name of network], which we are member of since early this year and to to fill the whole thing with LIFE and to to to connect to to the other network partners. So this is we have a whole office doing with this, and the the [role] of the [international unit] is also active in in the international in in, in MAKING the international, making up the international PROFILE in discussions with the rectorate for instance, where are the big the big lines? But BASICALLY the on the university level, the question how much internationalization do we want, what is internationalization strategy? Are there any REGIONS in which we want to be want to set a special FOCUS on, THIS is a matter of the rectorate and this will be discussed in the rectorate and in and since internat- international internationalization is one of the big PILLARS of the strategic profiling of the university, it is also laid down in the so-called Development Plan Development Plan is you can find this online and on the Internet. It is like the MAIN strategic sheet document of the university, and there we have a designated to a SPECIAL chapter just dealing with internationalization. And so the WHOLE rectorate makes up an international STRATEGY with the help of the of the [role] of the [international unit], which brings a lot of INPUT.

And also as you mentioned before, there is the Uniko Forum Internationalis. I believe it's DEFUNCT right now, but maybe it will be restarted soon. So also here the [role] of the [international unit] is a member of this of this forum, yeah, and brings relevant inputs from this. The [role] of the [international unit] is also our Institutional Liaison Officer to the [name of association], yeah, which is a huge it's not huge, but it's very FINE University European University Network, which brings a lot of input for us because we see how other universities in Europe LIVE internationalization or STRIVE also for more internationalization. So we get a LOT of ideas from this, as I mentioned before, for instance, to INCREASE the cooperation with African universities, which is a BIG issue right now on the European level.

So we get also input from this side, yeah umm and as you see on, and also the the, the, the [role] of internationalization as well as the [governance role] is in strong contact with the ministry, where we have like the national contact points for the various European programs sitting and there is also a strong and close dialogue, yeah.

Researcher  
OK, so um how about the top down influences on internationalization in respect of doctoral schools? So when I look at the National Development Plan, it also has ‘Systemziel 4: Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses‘. So I was wondering, it seems like a kind of internationalization strategy, it kind of meets TWO goals in terms of the doctoral schools-

[P9]  
Yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah, definitely. You you see, we see internationalization on ALL levels. Yeah. So it's not internationalization just for the SAKE of internationalization, but it has to there has to be a basic SENSE about this. And this is the basic sense why we do this have a meaning why we do this is we want to increase our VISIBILITY, yeah, on the international scene, we want to be ABLE to attract the BEST researchers and the best students for our programs and the whole internationalization why we DO this is just to facilitate these two things, yeah. And on the on the set for career development or doctoral education, this is why we we started so so to be it was a big big thing in 2009, 2010 we have to reform of doctoral education in the first place. Yeah you do a lot of things. We want to be we want to make we want we wanted to make doctoral education to be internationally COMPETITIVE and internationally VISIBLE yeah, and why to do that just to increase for one its to increase uh the QUALITY of doctoral education, yeah, but also to be to have an international visible doctoral programs or to have international visible doctoral programs to ATTRACT the best people from all over the world to come and make doctor come to do their doctoral education here in Austria here in [city]. Yeah also to because WE wanted to have umm, the next generation of researchers of early stage researchers here, because THOSE are the people who will then come to the university, maybe say this is a good place to BE and start their postdoc career here and so on. And so we have, we have for the academic ‘Nachwuchs’, yeah, we have the, the we have we have to set the STAGE for this. Yeah. And this is what we we we make we developed this kind of doctoral education programs, the doctoral schools. Yeah.

And ALSO we have also had had the VISION that that THESE doctoral schools would be something like like ‘Leuchttürme’, we say in Austria, like they have STRONG international visibility and say OK people come HERE to make the doctoral education here, yeah, this is MAINLY done by with English CURRICULA. So we have a LOT in the in the doctoral program EVERYTHING can be done in English. So and the people come here and they see this from ALL over the world and say hey man, they they're doing great stuff in [case study university], in [subject area], but they have a DOCTORAL school and they also have a lot of ERCs, and they have a lot of big researchers here and big names. And so this this will make a whole great PACKAGE to make the [case study university] and [city] and Austria as as VISIBLE for the scientific community as possible. Yeah. And just after we have now we have 15 doctoral schools in place and we are planning to do some more. And now we are going a bit further. Now we’ve started, we reckon that OK, we get a lot of great people for doctoral schools, but we have to start earlier. We have to start also at the MASTER’S level and we have we have to have a FEW international visible English master programs, which provide yeah, the NEXT generation of graduate students and doctoral students for our doctoral schools, which can then be in line with the next generation of postdocs and academics here at the [case study university]. So the GOAL of the the internationalization is a BIG goal on all stages, starting at the university uh starting at the student level with Erasmus Exchange with international master programs going on the on the graduate level with the doctoral schools and then with special programs for postdocs, for instance, to keep to GET the best, now starting for instance with [?], which is a great postdoc program or we have special postdoc schemes for female postdocs and also for international postdocs, we have VERY strong in [name of exchange program], the [name of exchange program] in the from the EU. Yeah, you probably know this it’s a postdoc funding scheme for international postdocs coming from Europe to [city], so this is one of our of our BIG focuses in third party funding support. Yeah. So we get a lot of [name of exchange program] postdocs, and THEN we try on the next stage, we try to APPOINT the best professors from all over the world. So you see, this is something like going on ALL stages with the overall goal, getting the best students and getting the best researchers from ALL over the world to come to Europe to come to Europe, to come to Austria, to come to [city], to come to the [case study university].

Researcher  
OK, so at master’s level is this, I mean, you mentioned the exchange programs, but also the need for continuation of studies you know to to build the the profile and continue say like you said talent from master’s to doctoral level. So are those the two MAIN reasons why you feel English or you think English programs are increasing at master’s level through for these reasons?

[P9]  
Definitely, definitely. We try to increase English on ALL levels is, also already on the bachelor level, but MOSTLY on the master level, where we see this is maybe this is something where we can really get the the the TALENT from all over the world. Then on the doctor in the doctoral curricula, we try to make everything as ENGLISH as possible and generally not only in in, in curricula or student student matters, but we try to be, it's also called ENGLISH FIRST strategy, yeah, which is something we we develop but are currently implementing, or instance, all websites of the university needs to be in ENGLISH. There needs to be PRESENTABLE, needs to be VISIBLE and READABLE for all the international scientific community, and also for the STUDENTS which would be interested in coming to the [case study university]. So this is like, we were really going on ALL levels. And this is something we work for. We're not finished. Yeah. So maybe if you see the [case study university] website maybe everything is in ENGLISH, yeah, but if you go down for the institute sites or the sites of the study programs, maybe not EVERYTHING is is, you know, already implemented so, but this is something we we currently work on, you know and we see. So we see the we see the GRAVE importance of this. Yeah, if this would maybe answer your questions. We believe that ENGLISH is the lingua franca of the scientific international scientific COMMUNITY. And we try to be more international and thus we want it to be uh, yeah, more English and everything yeah you see, in the in in the curricula but as well as on the websites and everything. Yeah. And this also was, for instance, like in the personnel department, so they have preset English contracts for all the researchers coming from abroad. So they can be and also have special support for researchers coming from abroad so they can be welcomed and and and have an EASY start at the university if they come from a from another country. So this is something, this goes on so many levels. So this is like maybe the international strategy ((signals top level with hands)) which goes down onto so many levels starting from the development of the curricula ((moves hands to bottom)) to development of the support structures ((moves hands to middle)). Yeah. So how can we provide the best support from international international people coming to the university. And goes on to special SCHEMES we have for the funding programs we have for international students, early stage researchers and so on. And then we have like a DOCTORAL education with the doctoral schools and yeah, and and and and and and special funding programs for postdocs. And then we try to appoint, we have a special in a in a RESEARCH strategy or an overall development strategy, you see the internationalization is ALSO a big issue. So whether the Rector wants to appoint uh, the BEST people from the world, from all over the world, and not just from Austria. And so if you this is also reflected in the like the the appointment strategy, if you see if you look at the appointments the professors coming to the university in the last years, you see that from 2010 on until now about [#]% are coming from ABROAD and NOT from Austria. So you see interna-, interna-, internationalization is is an issue or is important on SO many levels not from student student level until the highest uh the highest strategy level. And in ALL of this, English as a language is SUPER important.

Researcher  
OK. And and how about when I looked at the UNIDATA database for [case study university], but also you know, ‘Gesamt’ for all of the public universities? It seemed like there's a a huge amount of appointments from GERMANY for for a professorial staff. Is that a kind of strategy as well? Is that related? Is there a REASON for that or?

[P9]  
Yeah, it's not a reason. It's it's not like a strategy. It's not like we're FOCUSING on on, on the, on Germany or whatever DACH region. This is something which is maybe INTRINSIC to the to to [city] or the [case study university]. We have a strong attraction for German researchers and students, and it's the language, of course, yeah. And also it's really nice to be in [city] and we have a great university. So we attract a lot of people from Germany, which are of course, you know there are 10 times as many Germans as Austrians. And there are, of course, some among them who are quite COMPETITIVE when it comes to appointments. And so this is and I believe it's it's more a fact, it's not like a strategy, it's more like a fact of life. Yeah, that this happens. It's not like we we Germany is not like a strategic region we focus on but it's maybe because we're so ATTRACTIVE for German researchers that a lot of people decide to come here. Yeah.

Researcher  
Um I'm interested, this is not your your university um data, but I guess they get it through your ‘Wissensbilanz’ data. But they, they, the BMBWF database, it has a SEPARATE category for Germany than for the rest of the EU when it's looking at appointments. So I was interested in WHY it's listed separately. Do you know what I mean? But I don't think that would be related.

[P9]  
No, it's not. I don't believe there's a strategy. It's probably because this effect is quite KNOWN. Also at the university at the ministry level, and when we talk about internationalization, we also have to maybe we have to consider this fact. Maybe. And just yeah, I believe this is is, is is a separate category because I don't know if it's that it's not maybe an APPOINTMENT from Germany is is is also SEEN as international. Yeah. And and I don't believe that this is maybe not as WORTHY or something like a another appointment or so. It's just I believe there's a big fact with a HUGE student body coming from Austria. Actually, it's quite a bit of the majority of international students, also from Germany and the majority of our appointed staff coming from other countries is also from Germany. So this is the FACT, and I believe this is not only true for the [case study university], but also for other Austrian universities. So I believe this is effective, which is all also known to the MINISTRY, and they have a separate category to, you know, to have to calculate this out when they when they consider international [?]. But we have ALSO a lot of high calibre appointments made from OTHER universities like [US university name] and [UK university name] and the last years and so, we we the trend is quite POSITIVE. And also when WE consider or when we make our international strategy, we also consider the DACH region which is Austria, Germany and Switzerland as a SEPARATE category. We also see, OK, we know there's a lot of INFLUX from these countries but when we look at the data, we also see, OK, this is an OWN category standing ALONE. Yeah, because we don't have to DO much to attract people from here. Do you see. We want to we have to do a LOT to get the high calibre people from, from from, from UK or from US. Yeah. So this is also something we consider when WE do our strategy or when we RETHINK our strategies.

Researcher  
Sorry, what what did you call that, the REGION of the German speaking countries is DACH?

[P9]  
That is it a term that is Deutschland, Österreich, Switzerland? Yeah, it's the car abbreviation, like the ‘Nummertafeln’, it's DACH region. Yeah, so it's, this is, I don't KNOW if there’s an ENGLISH term for this.

Researcher  
Can you put the German in the chat just so I can have a look? Sorry, I'm I'm not catching the abbreviation.

[P9]  
Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Sure. Uh, I sent it to you.

Researcher  
Thanks.

[P9]

So. There you have an English DEFINITION for this.

Researcher  
So DACH, DACH countries ((laughing)). I thought I'd misheard because I was thinking roof what?

[P9]  
It's the license plates, you know, it's the it's the, the, the, the the on the license plates. D is for Germany, A is for Austria and CH is for Switzerland.

Researcher  
OK. Yeah, sorry. I was I wasn't making the CONNECTION there with the license plates. Sorry. Also at the beginning towards the beginning of the interview, you mentioned two European initiatives. So [name of network], you said the European universities and but what was the other one? I think I missed you said two main exchange initiatives.

[P9]  
Yeah. OK. So we have WITHIN our internationalization strategy, we have of course [name of network] as a EUROPEAN university is one of our top priorities. So to PARTICIPATE in a European university or maybe in the future, we will participate also in in FURTHER initiatives. This is a big issue for us and this is a big focus for us. The SECOND one is networking within so-called university associations, which is like networks of European universities who work together or that work together to further their internationalization goals. Yeah. And one of this is the [name of association]. Yeah. I also sent an email the [name of association] of research universities, research, research [?] universities.

Researcher  
Right.

[P9]  
This is a network which is is really, it's just really IMPORTANT for us.

[P9]  
So and and we see these kind of as facilitators multiplicators for our internationalization strategy the same, the next is the is the ‘Zentralnetzwerk’. This is also REALLY important for us. So those are like networks where the university leadership is connecting with rectors and vice rectors and also specialists from other universities to discuss current European topics. And also the [name of association] is super important because they are also an organization which gets really insight, intelligence and knowledge what is going on at the university at the European level at the Commission, they have a office in [city], and to see what is important for the universities. And also they do bit of LOBBYING, yeah. For instance, when it comes to the European framework program and for the missions and the European framework program, they help us to put our input to give our input to our, get our input to the European political uh leadership. Yeah. So this is quite important, but also it's a network which will a lot of of [name of association] universities are participating also in [name of network] and we have a lot of lessons learned and exchange how to be active in such a network. For instance, there's a lot of beneficial information coming from this network, and ALSO we see this as ALL the university networks, as multiplicators for our VISIBILITY and for our international activities because there's, so we believe that from the TOP down perspective, you can only do SO much. You can facilitate the exchange. You can help the researchers, support them, but the CONNECTION have to be BETWEEN the researchers and between, the the students have to WANT to go somewhere. Yeah, and and to FIND these kind of PLACES which would be interesting to go to for researchers, that's why we put in place these kind of mechanisms. We have the strategic partnerships, but also as another pillar of internationalization we see those university networks, because they often have also some mobility schemes, not the [?] network, but the ‘zentral’ network, for instance. And the [name of network], it is part of the program. So we see this as umm well, REALLY an important pillar of internationalization strategy, yes.

[P9]  
So [name of network] is the European university that we participate in. Umm, this is quite interesting. And about the strategic partnerships, they are WHOLE different thing you know they know so on international, others are NON-European partnerships, you see, because European of course EUROPE is our is our top priority yeah, and the SECOND priority is then the US and China, and this is where we have this university, and also [city] which is in Japan, where we say US and Asia yeah.

So this is where we have the strategic partnerships in place where we want to facilitate partnership with the university, but also EXCHANGE on the levels of RESEARCHERS more and MAYBE graduate students, NOT so much students. But we have [number of Euros] for each partnership each year earmarked for such international internationalization activities to have workshops and so on and then visits and so and joint partnership. Just RECENTLY the [name of university in Middle East] which is one of our strategic partners came to the [case study university] with the delegation of university specialists and we were talking about internationalization, reputation management, rankings and so on, stuff that is important for BOTH the universities.

And THIS could be the beginning of a more intensive partnership with this university. So this is something we put into place a few years ago, the strategic partnerships. THEN we had COVID of course, which delayed a LOT of international activities. But NOW we're really starting through with the strategic partnerships.

Researcher  
OK. And um yeah, I mean ANOTHER question I had which you just touched on was how about the BOTTOM up influences of internationalization. So what do you think those are?

[P9]  
Of course, the those the regions which we want to focus, they have to this this COMES from somewhere and this comes from the bottom because there, if there are a lot of RESEARCHERS want to cooperate with the with PARTNERS from the from a specific REGION or specific INSTITUTION. Yeah, this is what we come up that this could be a INTERESTING region for a strategic partnership in the first place. Yeah. Because as I mentioned before the the, the, the internationalization ITSELF, it has to come from the people, it has, the RESEARCHERS have to want to go somewhere or to interact with with cooperation partners and also the STUDENTS have to want to go need to want to go somewhere or people have outcomings WANT to come to university from somewhere. So this also starts with some kind of DEMAND. Yeah. So to so if they have, we have a LOT of connections with the US or for instance with Chinese universities with for [unit name], for our [unit name]. So there was some demand there. And what we do at the university levels is we try to SORT out which which was which would be INTERESTING for a cooporation on the university level as [?]. So how many researchers are interested, is it just a FEW? Or maybe we find out that actually there are HUNDREDS of them would that would be interested or would BENEFIT from a cooperation with these regions. And THEN we start then this comes up for the in the in the in the discussion process of the RECTORATE or discussion process with the MINISTRY and and so on. And THEN we define this region as a TARGET region for internationalization. So of COURSE there is a strong bottom up component to this since without any researchers WILLING to be active in this region, this would be totally useless or totally meaningless, yeah.

Researcher  
And how about students, for example, Austrian students? And do you notice any bottom up influences from Austrian students? I mean in terms of competitiveness and English language programs.

[P9]  
I don’t know. Maybe on the doctoral levels, but on the student levels, I don't know, because ACTUALLY this is something you have would have to ask us our our specialists from the [international unit] because I DON'T know how, for instance, the Erasmus partnerships are negotiated. There are lists of universities where students can go with the Erasmus program, which is of course the most important exchange program for the [case study university] student body.

And and and I didn't know if if the DEMAND or the interest of the students is considered when when making this partnership or HOW this is done. So this is something I'm sorry I cannot answer truly or the fully because you have to ask the [role] of [international unit].

Researcher  
Don’t worry. No, I was just wondering because you mentioned competitiveness and DEMAND and you know whether there's a DEMAND by Austrian students for-

[P9]  
One one example things in one one one example for this would be the cotutelle. Yeah. For instance, if we have a DOCTORAL student who would be interested in making a JOINT degree with ANOTHER university ABROAD, yeah, THEN we would support this by making a so-called cotutelle which is like a joint degree, an individual joint degree certificate. Yeah. So this is something where we SUPPORT doctoral students who would be interesting in individual international cooperation. Yeah. And also on the doctoral level, we PLAN to have a lot of network activities between the doctoral schools, with schools, from from, from other European countries. So this is on a DOCTORAL level, I know some examples. I don't know for sure how it is on the, on the, on the, on the undergraduate level.

Researcher  
And I mean for example, I was thinking about ENGLISH language programs as WELL in terms that, do you think it attracts home students because they want to do an English language master’s, for example, and it might help against competition LOCALLY. So for example, between your university and other Austrian universities.

[P9]  
DEFINITELY because people are are a lot of aware of their career perspectives right now and people are, believe, tend to students tend to be MORE flexible, more and more mobile than in the past. And they of COURSE they would be interested in English speaking programs. This is called international station at HOME, which is also a big issue for internationalization strategy. So this is also something we we FOCUS on and we will PROVIDE for students. Yes, sure. And STRONGLY believe that ANY English speaking program would be beneficial for all the for the people also for the Austrian students here at home yeah.

Researcher  
So so a little bit before you mentioned the phrase English FIRST, is that like a kind of strategy or PRINCIPLE or is something you're AIMING at within your university? What what does that mean in English FIRST?

[P9]  
It means is especially for a communication THING. Yeah. If we believe that we need to be MORE international in to increase our visibility especially our ONLINE visibility, and this means that it's one of the BIG issues or one our biggest focus points that we want to have our web presence of the universities 100% also in English. Yeah. So that we will be more accessible and more visible for RESEARCHERS and STUDENTS or abroad.

Researcher  
So it's a communication strategy by your UNIVERSITY.

[P9]  
It's a communication it's a communication strategy yes. But it does not mean that we plan, for instance, all the curricula need to be in English or should be in English. Yeah. So this is NOT the case.

Researcher  
No. So it's by, is it about the SEARCHABILITY of your website, things like that.

[P9]  
Yeah. For instance, this is the yeah, yeah.

Researcher  
OK. Umm, but and and so is it, is this something that this phrase English first, is this something that the rectorate or the [communications unit], or where where does it come from? Is it? Do you know? ((laughing))

[P9]  
That's a good question. I believe it. It's a it's, I don't know where the TERM came from, I don't know, but PROBABLY from the [communications unit] or the [international unit], I'd say [international unit], yeah, I'd say maybe you should look there.

Researcher  
But it it basically has basically has to do with VISIBILITY and yeah, OK.

[P9]  
Yeah. If we want to be more attractive for international students and for international researchers, then this would be the first thing, because also we we talk a lot with researchers. We have sounding boards, we have a scientific advisory boards consisting of high calibre international RESEARCHERS and one thing they all say to us is you have to increase your the accessibility of your web pages because if you want to attract the researchers from a special field, he or she won't just look at the at the MAIN page, he or she would first look at the page of the institute where a potential cooperation partner will be FROM. And if this institute site is only in German, yeah, this would. There would be you know umm not beneficial for our future cooperation, let's say.

Researcher  
Right. Yeah. So I'm wondering, you mentioned the ‘Leistungsvereinbarung’ with the BMBWF. And do you do you think that your in negotiation with the BMBWF to have this performance agreement, is there any DOWNWARD influence to the university units, I I guess through the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ or something that would influence whether English is used as the language of a course?

[P9]

Yes, of course. It is already, it is already it, I can mention, so BASICALLY mechanism is like THIS. We make the the university rectorate makes a DEVELOPMENT plan which is the MAIN strategic document putting down all the strategic big lines for instance be more international have all the website made in English. Then based on this we have the ‘Leistungsvereinbarung’ with the MINISTRY, which we where we set some GOALS based on the notions of the ‘Entwicklungsplan’. Yeah, and THERE we have, for instance, we want more publications with international coauthors, for instance. We want more publications in, in, in international journals and not only in monographs from Austrian publishers, for instance. Yeah. And also we have like the web page. Yeah, we say we we need ALL web pages or MORE web pages of ALL the institutes in English. Yeah. And THEN with based on the ‘Leistungsvereinbarung’, which is something only the university commits to as a whole and also the rectorate reports to the ministry about the ACHIEVEMENTS of the goals, but THEN of as a university is consist as a university consisting of [#] people and [#] students, of course, ALL the individual have to participate in the achievement of the goals. So how we do facilitate this as a rectorate we have the so-called ‘Zielvereinbarungen’ target agreements with the FACULTIES, where the rectorate says to the faculty to the Dean of the faculty, OK, we have said the to the, we have negotiated with the ministry that we need MORE international websites. So as our analysis shows only TEN of your institute websites are in English.

[P9]  
Let's see that until NEXT year. You have 15, yeah, or 20 year. Yeah. And if not, maybe we think about not maybe some but maybe some BONUS or some INCENTIVE if they do this. Yeah. So this is like how this is done. Yeah. And also they get goals for for INTERNATIONAL publications and something like this. Yeah. So this is how how the WHOLE thing flows together, and then we can report back to the MINISTRY that we have achieved the goal.

Researcher  
And and does the do the, does the faculty have to then meet those goals in the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ in order to get the money at a certain amount of money from from the?

[P9]  
Yeah, yeah. No, we’re not that strict. We don't have, like, budget orient, like performance-oriented budgets. Yeah, we DO have these, but ONLY for third party funding and publications, not for internationalization, internationalization. But THIS could be maybe something worthwhile thinking of for the future. But BASICALLY, yes. Yeah. Basically, yeah, there are PERFORMANCE indicators. And if the, normally it's so it's more like bonus structure. So if the if the faculties meet their goal, they get MORE money. Yeah, but it's only a small percentage of the total sum.

Researcher  
So so apart from the, say, international publications or copublications, is there anything else that would come down through the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ that you think would affect whether a course or program is actually in English or NOT so. Does it sometimes include directives to have a course in English rather than in German?

[P9]  
The case of teaching. In the field of teaching. No, because I don't no I I don't believe this is the STRATEGY of the university. We DON'T want to have anything in English or EVERYTHING in English, even on the BASIC level. Yeah, there are SOME masters, they are only a selective FEW master programs which we’re proud of and which we believe should be THOROUGHLY in English. Yeah. The same goes for the doctoral education. Yeah, but on the on the on the, on the basic on a bachelor level or a master level I don’t know [%] of the master programs or [%] of the master programs, I don't know. Actually don't, don't ask me. We we asked the, OR there are some ‘Zielvereinbarungs’ goals considering suitability of of how you were able to study this, how many, for instance, how many EXAMS are provided each semester and so on and how and also the dropout rates and something, this is considered during the ‘Zielvereinbarung’. But I'm not SURE quite now if we have goals regarding the the the the percentage, for instance, of English speaking Curricula or something like this. I don't believe so. I don't believe it's a strategy. It's a strategy for SOME you have, we want to have some SELECTIVE international visibility, visible masters programs AND the doctoral education, but I don't believe it's a strategy at the at the bachelor level to be to have all everything in English.

Researcher  
But um it could be for example do, do you mention say specific COURSES that if there are new courses to be implemented they should be implemented in English and that can come through the ‘Zielvereinbarung’, I mean rather than a strategy with a percentage, but something that's, I'm asking because I I spoke to someone who HAD mentioned that something was in the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ about the language, but it could be that they were just referring to particular COURSES, for example, so or implementation of NEW courses, because also in the ENTWICKLUNGSplan also sometimes says we're going to change this course to from German to ENGLISH or we're going to offer a NEW course in English for example. So I was wondering if there was anything. But not as, I understand what you're saying not a strategy, not as a yeah.

[P9]  
Could be. I I don't know, but frankly, I don't know. And also I have to say the the, the, the, the curricula are ALSO regulated by the SENATE, not only the RECTORATE, yeah. So maybe some of them, the ‘Curriculakommission’ who is in charge for the for, for the the the you know how a study program is filled with, with, with ‘Lehrveranstaltungen’. Yeah, it's it's also, it's basically in the HAND of the Senate, so maybe you should ask someone from the ‘Curriculakommission’ how this is done.

Researcher  
Yeah. No, I was just curious, I mean, I when I when I look online, obviously I can find a lot of publicly available documents like development plans and and and also the performance agreement is, but I guess the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ is like a confidential document, is it? Are they not?

[P9]  
No, it's not. It's not confidential.

Researcher  
OK.

[P9]  
It's OK you can. It's it's, it's PUBLICLY available, but only for the members of the faculty. Yeah.

Researcher  
Right. Yeah. So it's it's not. Yeah. OK.

[P9]  
But it's NOT public.

Researcher  
You know that that's why for me. Yeah. For me, trying to figure out how the process works, there's like a piece missing because obviously I can't see what a ‘Zielvereinbarung’ is. So that's why I'm asking YOU. Do you know what I mean? So when I when I try to put the pieces together of the jigsaw, like in terms of you've got the, you know, national development plan and this is kind of there's some kind of alignment between the institutional development plan and then there's a negotiation for the PERFORMANCE agreement and then the yeah and that that's where it stops for me. I I can't see beyond that. So I was just curious how does the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ work, you know, so.

[P9]  
Yeah, it works like THIS that we have a umm there is a um a DRAFT featuring several suggestions by the rectorate, which should be done in the next years. Then there is a negotiation between the rectorate and the the Deans of the faculty and not the only the Dean, but also the vice deans, for instance, for research, for teaching, internationalization, and so on. Then also the STUDY program, the HEADS of the study programs are there, you know, at the [case study university] we have this [?], we have FACULTIES who organize the research, but we have study programs who organize the TEACHING, and so the head of the study programs are also part of the negotiation team on the side of the FACULTY and they negotiate about various stuff, yeah, for instance, publication goals, third party funding goals. Umm, INTERNATIONAL goals would be, for instance, more international websites or, I don't know, something like this.

Researcher  
Umm.

[P9]

And on the TEACHING side, we have something like more ACTIVE student, more, more, for instance, more staff for the student service centres or more activities to ENHANCE active study studying on, for instance, more exams or more ‘Lehrveranstaltungen’ accessible for people with jobs and something like this. Yeah. And THEN there were some goals which are set in the negotiating in the, in the, in the ‘Zielvereinbarungen’, and THEY have to be fulfilled by the faculties, AND we monitor this as a rectorate and ask them again next year if they have fulfilled those, those those GOALS. And if so, they get a BONUS or something like this. That's all a DIFFERENT budget, or something yes. THIS is how this works. Yeah, BUT as I mentioned before, the making up of a curricula is also a thing of the SENATE. So not everything the RECTORATE can have a has a LOT of say in this but how curricula are made up is, for instance, WHICH kind of study programs, yeah, we do, this is the THING of the rectorate. This is something the rectorate can say, you can say, for instance, the faculty PROPOSES a new ENGLISH speaking master program, yeah, then this will be discussed and this can be set, for instance, in the ‘Zielvereinbarung’ in the target agreement. Yeah. But THEN of course, there has to be a curricula. And this curricula, the rectorate says to the senate, we want to do this study program, make a curricula for this. Yeah. And then the ‘Curriculakommission’ begins working and starts doing a curricula. And THEN this curricula has to be FINALIZED and something like this and then it can be implemented.

Researcher  
Hmm, that's interesting. Thanks so much. So it can come both ways. It can come from the BOTTOM upwards and from the TOP downwards.

[P9]  
Yeah.

Researcher  
And then the senate’s involved in the curriculum, yeah.

[P9]  
OK. Of course, if there's if, if there's DEMAND from maybe it's this, maybe this answers your question from before. So if there is a lot of demand for a SPECIAL study program for instance, which can be international, there has to be if there's a demand for a ENGLISH speaking master in [subject area] or so COMING from the professors, coming from the researchers as well as for from the from the STUDENTS because here the rectorate decides upon this. Yeah, it says OK, we'll make THIS. We put this in a ‘Zielvereinbarung’. Yeah.

So this is a PERFECT example, for instance, of a joint TOP down, BOTTOM up approach. We say the top down strategy is we want more international master’s here master studies study programs in fields that are relevant to the SCIENTIFIC profile of our university. Yeah. THEN there's the bottom up notion saying, OK, we have four new professors in [subject area] coming from [UK university] and from [?], and and they say, OK, we want to make this kind of program, which would be like this, this, this and we cooperate with the Austrian Academy of Sciences and so on. Then the RECTORATE says, OK, but is there enough demand by the STUDENTS, THEN we would look how many still we would analyze how many students would be interested in this would be relevant for this kind of study. And THEN we would say, OK, we'll MAKE this study program. Yeah. So this is maybe this what you mentioned before is would be a joint top down, bottom up approach.

Researcher  
Right, right. OK, that's great. Sorry. I realize we're kind of towards the end of TIME. And so is there anything YOU'D like to talk about or mention about the topic that I haven't given you a chance to to discuss?

[P9]  
Ohh I hope I, I hope I came across with all my points and I hope you get a good OVERVIEW about our internationalization strategy and how it works on all the levels yeah and how it is it is.

Researcher  
So helpful. Thank you so much. It's been really, really helpful. Thank you so much. Bye then.

[P9]  
Yeah, you're welcome and good luck with the with the study, OK.

Researcher  
Thank you. Thanks bye then.